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SERVICE DATE - MAY 17, 2002

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DOCKET NO. AB-55 (Sub-No. 612X)

CSX Transportation, Inc. - Abandonment Exemption - In Greenville, SC

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) has filed a petition for exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of approximately 1.31 miles of a line of railroad extending from Valuation Station 47+50 to Valuation Station 115+11.5 in Greenville, Greenville County, South Carolina. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

According to CSXT, no local traffic has moved over the line for at least two years. There is no overhead traffic on the line. No future traffic is anticipated. Thus, no traffic will be diverted to other transportation systems or modes as a result of the proposed abandonment. Abandonment of the line will result in the removal of the rail, cross-ties, and possibly the upper layer of ballast; subsequently, the operations and maintenance of this line will cease.

According to CSXT, there are no CSXT-owned structures that are 50 years old or older that are eligible for listing in the National Register that are part of the proposed action. The right-of-way is approximately 25 to 30 feet from the centerline of track.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSXT submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. CSXT served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has advised us that the project is not likely to have reasonably foreseeable adverse effects on resources under the jurisdiction of the USFWS that are currently protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control advised us that, based on the information provided, there should be no impacts to waters of the state.

The Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, Charleston District has determined that the abandonment, as proposed, will not involve work in a Navigable Water of the United States, nor will it entail the placement of fill material in a federally defined freshwater wetland or other water of the United States. Department of the Army authorization is not required for the project.

CSXT's environmental database reveals the possibility of manufactured gas plant waste on CSXT property in the vicinity of Bramlette Road in Greenville. CSXT is currently addressing these issues.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed and subject to the recommended mitigation measures, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and, therefore, no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does take place, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Surface Transportation Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592 or mail inquiries to the Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Kenneth Blodgett, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-55 (Sub No. 612X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Kenneth Blodgett, the environmental contact for this case by phone at (202) 565-1554, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at blodgettk@stb.dot.gov.

Date made available to the public: **May 17, 2002.**

Comment due date: **June 3, 2002 (15 days).**

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

